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between 1690 and 1715 they contributed fifty-eight per cent. These sums seem large. Yet from a general point of view they were not so great. For compared with the entire revenue of France, M. Cans is of the opinion that the contribution of the clergy was but three per cent. of the whole. 'It is manifest how terribly heavy the weight of taxation must have been upon the bourgeoisie and peasantry. In this manner history newly justifies the protests of Vauban and Fénelon, and the mordant pages of St. Simon.

JAMES WESTFALL THOMPSON.

Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series. Volume II., A. D. 1680-1720. Edited through the direction of the Lord President of the Council by W. L. GRANT, M.A., Beit Lecturer in Colonial History in the University of Oxford, and JAMES MUNRO, M.A., University Assistant in History in the University of Edinburgh, under the general supervision of Sir ALMERIC W. FITZROY, K.C.V.O., Clerk of the Privy Council. (London: Wyman and Sons. 1910. Pp. xl, 918.)

THE second volume of the *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series*, which covers the period from 1680 to 1720, yields in no way to the first in value and interest. As was to have been expected the entries throw light chiefly upon the working of the Council, a matter upon which we need light more than anywhere else, but the information furnished regarding colonial history is very considerable and there are in this volume not less than a hundred long sections that either give new facts or add to what is already known. Furthermore the volume contains hundreds of names of individuals and ships, many details regarding ordnance stores and the like, many in extenso copies of representations of the Lords of Trade and Board of Trade, and much information regarding governors' commissions and instructions. The student of colonial history will probably be surprised at the extent of the powers which the Council exercised over the plantations and at the numbers of appeals, petitions, and memorials with which it had to deal. Some day we shall have a competent study made of the Council in its relations to the plantations, and we shall then probably wonder why all this new material was not brought to light before.

The most important question raised by the editors in their preface concerns not the colonies but the committee system of the Council, a matter of interest to the student of English constitutional history. It is well known that under the Restoration standing committees were appointed at the beginning or in the course of each reign. It was so in 1660, it was so in 1685 (p. 75). We also know that a century later a standing committee of the Council for trade was appointed, and that to-day standing committees representing the old committees are appointed by Order in Council for Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man.

But we do not know certainly what was the status of the committee system between 1688 and 1784, though the natural inference has been that the standing committees were continued. In fact, any ordinary reading of the phraseology of the Register certainly supports that inference (*cf.* §§ 657, 1138).

But there is good reason to think otherwise. (1) After 1685 there is no mention of the revival of the standing committees at the beginning of the reign or any mention during the reign of particular persons appointed to constitute such committees. (2) Though many committees, under many names, are mentioned in the Register, the evidence seems to show that they are not separate committees but the same committee, that is, the whole Council sitting under different titles; the names are frequently used interchangeably and the same business is frequently referred to a committee with one title and debated or reported on by committees bearing other titles, some of which are called committees of the whole Council. (3) No committee records were kept, as was the case with the Lords of Trade before 1696 and the Committee for Trade in and after 1784, but the reports entered in the Register with occasional minutes of debate constitute the record of the committee. From these and other facts the conclusion seems inevitable that after 1688 standing committees as such ceased to exist and all business not referred to departments was debated technically before the whole Council. The first indication of the new procedure appears when, January 27, 1688, the Lords of Trade, hitherto a standing committee, were transformed into a committee of the whole Council (§ 249).

The editors do not attempt to explain why such a change was deemed necessary, but a possible reason may be suggested here. Technically, every meeting of the Council from which the king or lords justices were absent was a committee, no matter how many or how few (above two) were present. This is manifestly what is meant by the word "committee" as used in this volume after 1688, and it looks as if the abolition of the standing committees was but one phase of an attempt to strengthen the Council as committee, or, to put it another way, to check the growth of the standing committees at the expense of the whole Council. Sentiment against the standing committees of the Stuarts expressed itself in Parliamentary debate before 1701 and found formal embodiment in section iv. of the Act of Settlement. This desire to revive the deliberative functions and responsibility of the whole Council, because the committee system of the Restoration favored the growth of a possible instrument of despotism, the Cabinet Council, which though not a committee of the Council was closely identified with it, may have suggested the handing over of all conciliar business to the Council as committee and the requiring that all matters, plantation and other, be debated by the whole body and not by any of its parts.

But if such was the object of the change, the effort was a failure. Just as section iv. of the Act of Settlement was repealed in 1705, so

the attempt to revive the deliberative functions of the Council, by abolishing the standing committees, broke down of its own weight. Business was never actually done by the whole Council, but by a few members who were specially familiar with the subject in hand. The editors mention only one case of actual attendance, when three lords constituted the committee of the whole Council and sat as "The Lords of the Committee for hearing Appeals from the Plantations", so that it would be worth while to examine the Register and the memoranda of committee meetings among the unbound papers to see if conclusive evidence cannot be obtained on this point. But probably there was little real difference between the system under the Stuarts and that adopted after the Revolution, except that the absence of definite nomination must have detracted very much from the unity, independence, and solidarity of such committees. Any one of the Council could come in and debate and vote as he liked, and this fact must have prevented any shaping of policy on the part of the committee. The meetings might under some circumstances have resembled those of the private bill committees of the House of Commons under George III., though there is no reason to believe that the scandals arising from the attendance of the "guinea" members of Parliament would ever have accompanied the sittings of the committee of the Privy Council.

The editors of this volume have done their work remarkably well. The entries are models of compactness, and the plan which they have here adopted of bringing together all extracts relating to a particular subject in a single section will prove a great convenience to scholars. Cross-references are given to the Plantation Register, and to the *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, as far as December, 1700. Four appendixes are added, containing (1) commissions and instructions to colonial governors; (2) nominations, etc., to colonial councils; (3) colonial acts confirmed or disallowed; and (4) additional entries from the Plantation Register, not included in the rest of the work. The arrangement of entries, the elaborate tabulation of embargoes, the making up of the appendixes, and the gathering of the cross-references must have involved a great deal of intelligent and prolonged labor. Finally, it is a matter of congratulation that Sir Almeric W. FitzRoy, to whom the inception of the work is due, is able to announce the speedy completion of the undertaking. A third volume is promised for the autumn and a fourth will appear some time during the winter.

CHARLES M. ANDREWS.

Le Parlement de Bretagne et le Pouvoir Royal au XVIII^{me} Siècle.

Par A. LE MOY, Docteur ès Lettres. (Paris: H. Champion. 1909. Pp. xxiii, 605.)

THESE two attractively printed volumes by M. Le Moy form a most valuable contribution to the literature, still far from complete, of the history of the French parlements in the eighteenth century. The work